

**CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LEON VALLEY,
TEXAS, OCTOBER 6, 2008**

The City Council of the City of Leon Valley, Texas, met on the 6th day of October 2008 at the Leon Valley Conference Center, at 6421 Evers Road, Leon Valley, Texas, for the purpose of the following business, to-wit:

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOPS - 7:30 A.M.

Call to Order

Mayor Riley called the group to order and welcomed members of the Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT). Members of Council present for the workshops included Councilmembers Reyna, Baldridge, Dean and Nelson.

City Manager Lambert, Economic Development Director Ryan and Community Development Director Flores were also present. Other members of City Staff including City Secretary Feutz, City Accountant Wallace, Police Chief Wallace, Fire Chief Irwin, Public Works Director Vick, Library Director Trent were also present for many of the workshop meetings throughout the day.

Orientation, Goals, Expectations and bus tour of the Leon Valley area.

Members of the SDAT, members of Council, staff members and visitors discussed goals and expectations of the City for the SDAT and the group toured the City and surrounding area to better acquaint the SDAT with strengths, challenges, and general land uses for the greater Leon Valley area.

Welcome by Mayor, State of the City Presentation, SDAT Overview, and Sustainable Design Principles

Mayor Riley formally welcomed Erin Simmons, Director for Design Assistance from the Center for Communities by Design at the American Institute of Architects in Washington, D.C., SDAT Project Manager and architect James Sherrell from Polis Studio in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Jeremy Alvarez, architect from Stantec of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Todd Fagen, architect from Land Strategies, Inc, in Chicago, Illinois, Robert Yakas, architect from Robert Yakas Design in Hillsboro, Oregon, and David Marquardt, a landscape architect from Vierbicher Associates in Madison, Wisconsin. Everyone in the meeting group introduced themselves and provided information on their connection to the SDAT and the City of Leon Valley.

During the noon hour, Mayor Riley and the City Council, members of the SDAT, the Steering Committee, City Management team members, community members who provided educational resources, a technical committee, and members of the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) listened to information from the SDAT and City leaders on the SDAT process and how the City could benefit from this process.

Discussion with members of City Council, American Institute of Architects' Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT), the public, staff, and others for a sustainable design on:

- A. Transportation/Traffic/Connectivity/Mass Transit**
- B. City Center - Creating City "identity"**
- C. Economic Development**
- D. Land Use & Open Space**

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Workshop participants broke up into three smaller groups to work on initial input for assessments of 1) Transportation/traffic/connectivity and mass transit, 2) City Center - creating a city identity and land use and open space, and 3) Economic Development.

Throughout the various workshops, Mayor Riley and members of City Council welcomed members of the Steering committee, citizens, visitors, members of the local AIA Chapter, students from the UTSA College Architecture, and community leaders who joined the workshop meetings throughout the day.

Reports from Subcommittees

Once the groups gathered back as a single unit, spokespersons from each group reported on the initial input on each of the workshop sessions.

City Center/City Identity and Land Use:

Ideas and input were summarized by SDAT members David Marquardt and Robert Yakas and UTSA Student Campos. Together, they presented ideas for the group to consider: a 24-hour overlay district to accommodate business uses at Loop 410/Bandera Road, moving buildings closer to the roadway with parking in the back of commercial/business entities which could also calm traffic on Bandera Road, more mixed use zoning, limiting the number of curb cuts onto major highways and better traffic circulation patterns. They recommended Poss at Bandera Road as a possible city center - redevelopment, move some city facilities to the new center, creating mixed uses, with some identifying mark such as a tower/activity at the center to identify the place as a meeting place that was also pedestrian and bike-friendly. Suggestions also included raising the street level and redirecting Huebner Creek to capture stormwater that could be used for water features in the park and town center. They recommended using both sides of Bandera Road for the Town Center and using elevated walkways over Bandera Road with a mass transit stop in the center for people to go and come to Leon Valley. They also recommended streetscapes to help identify where Leon Valley begins and ends and monument signage at entrances to the City with unique signage being tied together throughout the City.

Transportation issues

SDAT team members James Sherrell and Todd Fagen reported on initial recommendations from their group: the need for connectivity on Bandera Road to engage the community with Bandera Road, the need to encourage bus, or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), ridership, of "safe walks" for sidewalks, and the need to improve connectivity between neighborhoods and schools for the children of Leon Valley. Mr. Fagen reminded everyone of the important interconnections between land use and transportation and that if the city wants mass transportation nodes for the City, it needs to consider high density employment and housing with mixed use development near potential transportation nodes. The team pointed out the need to improve connectivity for pedestrians and bicycles with sidewalks to fill in the gaps, especially near schools. They strongly recommended that State Highway 16 (Bandera Road) not be widened as it will only increase the traffic. They recommended that Leon Valley work with transportation agencies to change behavior not change road systems. They recommended that the wide right-of-way along Bandera Road be used for BRT stops, berms to soften the appearance of uses along Bandera Road, and for sidewalks. Parking lots with better connections between other parking lots and reconsidering the number of parking spaces being provided for future building projects so that only the number of spaces necessary are actually paved over were also discussed. The team and group encouraged consideration of having Evers Road become a 3-lane road with bike lanes on the sides and encouraged education of the youth of Leon Valley on bike safety by

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marketing the advantages of safe bike transportation throughout the city.

Finally, this group recommended short term goals of tax and business incentives for walk and bus to work programs that will reward employers and individuals with tax credits. The installation of bike racks was one easy goal coming from this group. They stated that the "greening" of parking lots could also be encouraged with funding incentives.

Economic Development

SDAT member Jeremy Alvarez presented information from the initial input of the group discussions on economic development. He stated that the group examined how healthy they felt Leon Valley was and what was slowing down business retention and expansion in Leon Valley. Recommendations presented from the group included: synchronization of traffic lights on Bandera Road with local control to allow pedestrian crossings, streetscapes and measures to soften street edges that would also promote pedestrian viability, measures to encourage youth to stay in the City, such as youth oriented projects, identifying a City center - such as Bandera at Huebner, development of a mixed use City Center to include locating city facilities at the center, and developing economic incentives to help outdated-looking businesses.

Other areas identified by this discussion group included observations on the reduced sales tax, the potential "catastrophic effect to the community" of a toll road on Bandera Road in Leon Valley, and the warning for the City not to be cowed into doing something radical about Bandera Road. They reported on observations of Bandera Road business areas being "chopped up" and not being competitive because they are carved up too small. They indicated that the access to businesses from and to Bandera Road was a drawback. Permanent drainage features along Bandera Road were cited as detractions from the area and encouragement was given to using the arts to make links with universities, the importance of bringing public education beyond high school into the area and finding appropriate funding mechanisms for changes.

Public Meeting

Following a break for dinner, the SDAT, Mayor Riley, Councilmembers, the City Manager, staff directors, and Steering Committee members met with interested members of Leon Valley to explain the SDAT process and goals of the process, to present their findings and observations thus far in the process and to hear comments from the community. Approximately thirty individuals were in attendance.

Property owner Albert Laubach recommended bringing in more retail businesses to attract residents and shoppers from west of Leon Valley, in the Medina area.

Darby Riley, President of the Historical Society of Leon Valley, told the SDAT that the 1862 Huebner Onion Homestead and stagecoach stop was a bright spot in Leon Valley. He reported on the efforts of the Society to get the building restored and of their need for \$67,000 for a comprehensive master plan and their request of the City for a grant to meet that financial need.

Historical Society consultant, Ed Conroy, addressed the group pointing out the unique potential a living history museum at the Huebner-Onion Homestead could bring to the City; stating that it could become a sought after destination for Leon Valley.

Resident and Zoning Commissioner Hal Burnside asked the SDAT how does one get shoppers to spend more money in Leon Valley, and what the City could do to make Leon Valley more

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attractive and more attractive to young people. Mr. Yakas suggested that office buildings attract people to live, shop and work in the City.

Resident and Stormwater Management Chair Robert Tome asked the SDAT to address a the need for a theme that will work with current business and be encouraging to bring others to Leon Valley. He recommended that Bandera Road be promoted as a business community rather than a thoroughfare and that mixed use development on corners be considered in the future for connections into currently residential-only areas. SDAT member Jeremy Alvarez challenged the group as to where is the theme - heritage, nature, or other. He stated that current retail does not look like an asset to the community right now, but cautioned everyone about insisting on only-single-family housing in neighborhoods.

Resident and Community Advisory Group Chair Rudy Garcia asked what could be done to address entrances to the City and what has real personal value to the community. SDAT member Bob Yakas recommended that Leon Valley has to change how it looks and they can do that by changing some of the rules for development and redevelopment in the City. He recommended that Leon Valley raise the bar and he pointed out that compact communities with more dense housing is growing.

Loretta Van Copenolle, a former resident of Leon Valley, expressed her concern that environmental and global warming issues were not being addressed in a sustainability assessment. Mr. Alvarez commented that the mixed use and density recommendations all grow out of their underlying concept that any assessment must be sustainable. He apologized for any misunderstanding that the SDAT may have given the group, but transportation nodes, mass transit, and how to make the City sustainable must not drive away investors for the City's future either. Other members of the team echoed the premise that sustainability includes environmental sustainability.

Resident Robert Tome again addressed the SDAT asking that the SDAT look at alternatives to an elevated highway cutting through Leon Valley to move people.

VIA Metropolitan Transit representative Christine Vina provided information on the BRT system from downtown City of San Antonio to the medical facilities at Babcock/Medical Roads. She encouraged the City to continue to pursue mass transit for its corridors and to support funding measures of such.

Resident and businessman Ali Baldrige thanked the SDAT and asked what happens after they leave. SDAT members encouraged the City to commit to one project to make it a success and to publicize their achievements and assets.

Adjourn

Following discussion, Mayor Riley thanked the SDAT and all in attendance and encouraged their return for additional workshops and the presentation of the preliminary SDAT findings on Wednesday, October 8, 2008. Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m. No votes or formal actions were taken at these workshop meetings.

Chris Riley

Mayor

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ATTEST:

Marie Feutz _____
City Secretary

Approved by City Council's unanimous vote at the Regular City Council meeting of October 21, 2008